

# Alumni tracer study of St. Dominic College of Asia: Looking into the employability of SDCA graduates

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## Abstract

One of the main objectives of St. Dominic College of Asia (SDCA) is to equip students to become professionals who are competent, productive, and socially responsible. It is to ensure the graduates and incoming students of this institution can adjust to changes in the sector. This study aimed to focus on the employability of graduates from St. Dominic College of Asia from the years 2014 to 2021. A descriptive research design was used to analyze a sample population of 211 graduates of the different programs. The author used an Alumni Tracer Study Questionnaire to determine the employability of the alumni members. Results showed that the majority of the graduates are employed even during this time of pandemic, while those who are unemployed are due to family concerns. Most were likely to have found their jobs recently, while the others most likely stayed with their current employers since the start of the pandemic. The researcher suggested that graduating students must be given enough training and experience to adapt to the current changes in the industry, particularly in the rise of using technology and applications due to work-from-home setups.

**Keywords:** Tracer study; alumni; employability; graduates.

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## Introduction

One of the goals of St. Dominic College of Asia (SDCA) is to prepare students to become competent, productive, and socially responsible professionals. Part of this is to ensure that graduates and graduating students of SDCA can adapt to changes in the industry. Producing graduates that are employable is part of the education process that involves different values, from imparting knowledge and understanding to developing skills and attributes (Hogan et al., 2013; McCowan, 2015; Succi & Canovi, 2020).

Recently, the world was shaken by the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, which caused lockdowns and restrictions in various places. With those lockdowns and restrictions, many people were not only forced to change from an onsite working environment to a work-from-home environment but also deal with the fallout caused by the sudden change of operations. According to an article by Investing in Women (2020), many had their jobs suspended, had reduced hours and pay, and were even forced to take unpaid leaves.

With these changes came the rapid adoption of digital technologies because of the expectation that they could be helpful in overcoming the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020). Skills necessary to adapt to these changes not only lie in being knowledgeable about technology but also in being good with cognitive, social, and behavioral skills. Improving the curriculum may prove to be necessary to address the mismatch between technical skills taught in classrooms and skills needed in the workplace (Abelha et al., 2020; Cobo, 2013; Ritter et al., 2018).

With this in mind, it is important to keep track of the current performance of the alumni members to be able to address not only the needs of SDCA graduates but also make the necessary adjustments to ensure the employability of graduating students in these rapidly changing times. The data gathered from the graduates of SDCA can provide a brief look into the changes in the industry, which can serve as a basis for developing programs, curriculum, and policies in SDCA.

## Objectives of the Study

1. What is the demographic profile of SDCA's graduates in terms of:
  - a. Gender
  - b. Civil Status
  - c. Program
  - d. Year Graduated
2. What is the status of the graduates in the following categories:
  - a. Post-Graduate Studies
  - b. Employment and Unemployment
    1. Tenure of Employment
    2. Location of Employment
    3. Length of Employment
    4. Employment Relation to Field of Study

5. Reasons of Unemployment
3. Was the college experience helpful to the graduates in their employment? What skills are valued by the graduates in their employment?
4. Is this the first job of the graduates?
  - a. How long did it take for the graduates to land their first job after graduating from SDCA?
  - b. What are the methods used by the graduates in searching for their first job?
5. What are the recommendations of the graduates to better improve SDCA and its program? What kind of programs are SDCA graduates willing to help within support of SDCA students?

### Significance of the Study

This study can hold valuable information that can be used in developing and improving programs for current SDCA students. The information can prove to be important to the following:

1. SDCA Administration for the Executive Leadership Group (ELG) to review academic policies, specifically on curriculum development and course offering.
2. Deans, registrar and program chairs to revisit the new curriculums and revise them in conformity with the needs of industry partners and considering the necessary adaptations brought upon by changes in the industry.
3. Department of Student Affairs and Services and related offices to plan, develop, and improve programs and activities to assist and better the experiences of the students.

### Scope and Delimitation

This study aimed to focus on the employability of graduates from St. Dominic College of Asia. The variables considered in the study were gender, civil status, program, employment status, post-graduate studies and recommendations of graduates. Data gathered was dependent on alumni students who answered the online survey questionnaire within the data gathering period. The focus of the study is to trace the employability, job retention and post-graduate studies of SDCA graduates.

### Research Design

This tracer study made use of the descriptive research design to analyze a sample population from graduates of the following programs: BA Communication, BS Education, BS Psychology, BS Accountancy, BS Accounting Technology, BS Business Administration, BS Computer Science, BA Multimedia Arts, BS Information Technology, BS Hospitality Management, BS Tourism Management, BS Biology, BS Medical Technology, BS Nursing, and BS Pharmacy from years 2014-2021.

### Subjects

The study used the non-probability sampling of subjects. Subjects in a non-probability sample are usually selected based on their accessibility or by the purposive personal judgment of the researcher. The respondents were 211 graduates in the fields BA Communication, BS Education, BS Psychology, BS Accountancy, BS Accounting Technology, BS Business Administration, BS Computer Science, BA Multimedia Arts, BS Information Technology, BS Hospitality Management, BS Tourism Management, BS Biology, BS Medical Technology, BS Nursing, and BS Pharmacy from the years 2014-2021. Accessibility is based on the internet access and availability to answer an online survey.

### Instrument and Data Gathering

The Alumni Tracer Study Questionnaire is the main instrument of the study. The questionnaire consists of the following parts: general information, educational attainment, and employment data. The survey questionnaire was made into a Google form and distributed through the emails of graduates from 2014 to 2021. Names, addresses, contact numbers, and email addresses of the graduates were obtained from the Alumni Office.

### Data Analysis

The responses obtained from the survey questionnaire were encoded and analyzed through different statistical treatments. The following statistical methods were used:

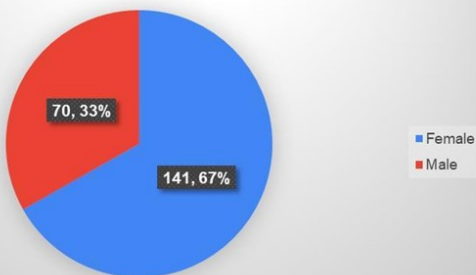
1. **Frequency** was used to generate information on the demographic profiles of the respondents.
2. **Percentage** was used to gauge the size of frequency with reference to the whole population. The formula for percentage method is  $\% = f/n \times 100$  where: % - percentage; f - frequency (number being compared); and n - total number of students.
3. **Mean** was used to find the average of a given set of data. The formula for mean is  $\bar{x} = \Sigma x / N$  where  $\bar{x}$  is the mean, x is the sum of all the values and N is the number of values.
4. The **ranking method** was utilized to determine the relative standing of acquired competencies and its usefulness in the graduates' present job. The highest in mean is ranked 1 and so forth.

### Results

The figures below discuss the results from the data gathered from 211 graduates through the online survey questionnaire of St. Dominic College of Asia. The data is as follows:

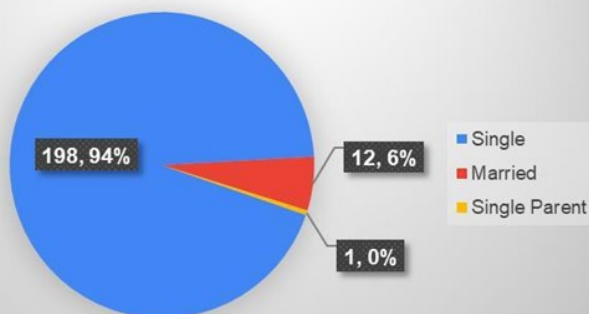
Figure 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents based on gender. Majority of the respondents are females with 141 responses, comprising 67% of the total. Meanwhile, there were 70 respondents who are males, comprising the remaining 33%.

**Gender of Respondents**



**Figure 1. Gender of Respondents**

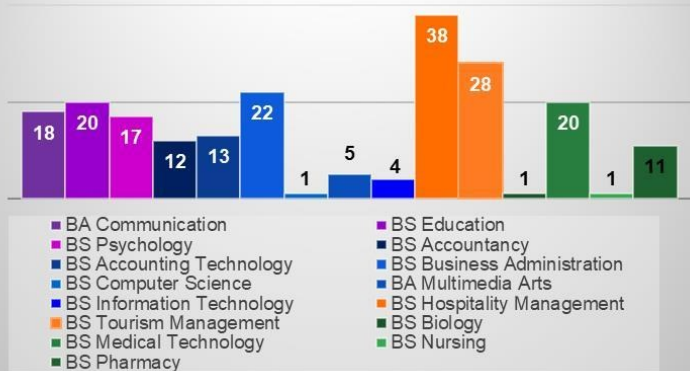
**Civil Status of Respondents**



**Figure 2. Civil Status of Respondents**

Figure 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents based on their civil status. Majority of the respondents are single with 198 responses comprising 94% of the total responses. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (6%) are married, and one (1) respondent answered that they are a single parent, compromising less than 1% of the total responses.

**Program of Respondents**

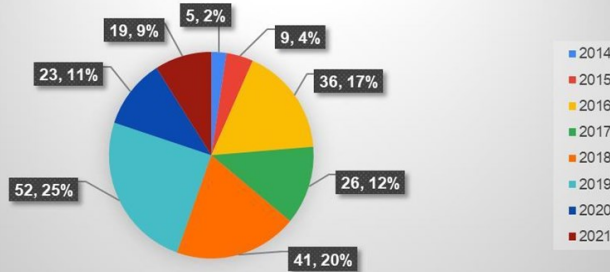


**Figure 3. Program of Respondents**

Figure 3 shows the demographic profile of the respondents based on the program they graduated in. Eighteen (18) respondents came from BA Communication, 20 respondents from BS Education, and 17 respondents from BS Psychology.

Meanwhile, twelve (12) respondents came from BS Accountancy, 13 respondents were from BS Accounting Technology, 22 respondents were graduates from BS Business Administration, one (1) respondent was from BS Computer Science, five (5) respondents came from BA Multimedia Arts, and four (4) respondents were from BS Information Technology. After that, thirty-eight (38) respondents were graduates of BS Hospitality Management and 28 respondents were from BS Tourism Management. Finally, one respondent was from BS Biology, 20 respondents were from BS Medical Technology, another one respondent was from BS Nursing, and 11 respondents were graduates of BS Pharmacy.

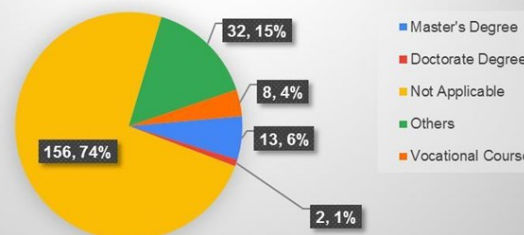
**Year Graduated of Respondents**



**Figure 4. Program of Respondents**

Figure 4 shows the demographic profile of the respondents based on the year they graduated. Only five (5) respondents were graduates from batch 2014. Nine (9) respondents graduated in 2015 and 36 respondents were from batch 2016. Twenty-six (26) respondents were 2017 graduates, 41 respondents were from batch 2018, and 52 respondents were graduates of batch 2019. Finally, twenty-three (23) respondents were graduates from batch 2020 and 19 respondents were graduates of batch 2021.

**Post-graduate Studies of Respondents**

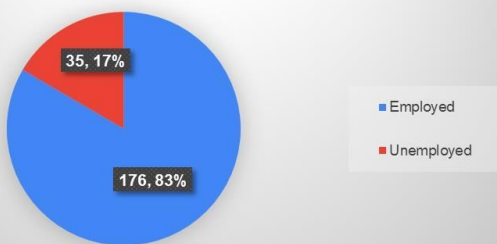


**Figure 5. Post-Graduate Studies of Respondents**

Figure 5 shows the demographic profile of respondents who are currently taking post-graduate studies. Majority of the respondents answered that it is not applicable to them with 156 or 74% of the responses. It is followed by others with 32 respondents or 15%, then by master's degree with 13 respondents or 6%. Eight (8) respondents or 4% mentioned taking a vocational course, and lastly, two (2) respondents or 1% answered that they are taking their doctorate degree.



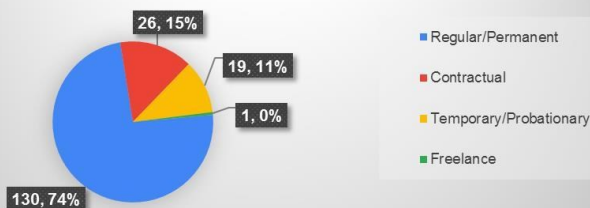
### Status of Employment of Respondents



**Figure 6.** Status of Employment of Respondents

Figure 6 shows the status of employment of the respondents. Of the 211 respondents, majority of them are currently employed with 176 responses composing 83% of the total responses. Only thirty-five (35) respondents answered that they were currently unemployed which composed the remaining 13%.

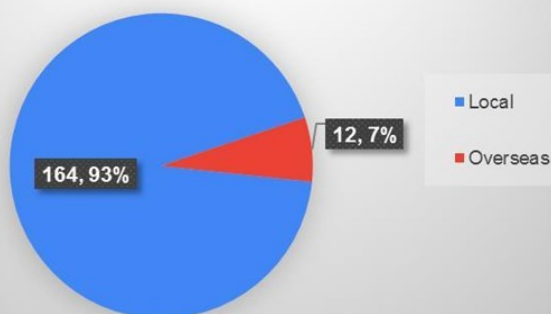
### Present Tenure of Employment of Presently Employed Graduates



**Figure 7.** Present Tenure of Employment of Presently Employed Graduates

Figure 2.2.1 shows the present tenure of employment of presently employed graduates from the respondents. Majority of the respondents are regular or permanent employees with 130 response or 74% of the total population. Twenty-six (26) or 15% of the respondents are currently contractual and 19 or 11% of the respondents are temporary or probationary employees. One respondent answered working freelance, which is less than 1% of the total responses.

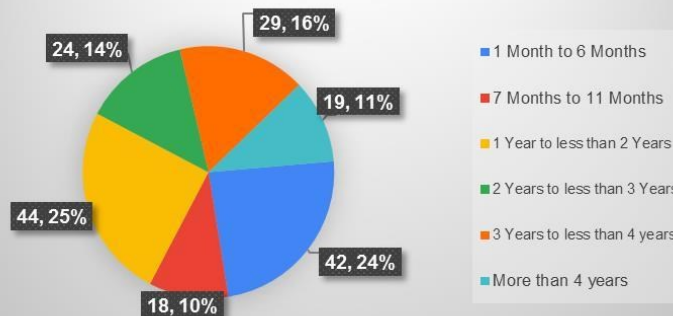
### Location of Employment of Respondents



**Figure 8.** Location of Employment of Respondents

Figure 8 shows the location of employment of the 176 currently employed graduate-respondents. Majority of the respondents answered that they were working locally with 164 responses or 93% of the total responses. There were 12 respondents or 7% of the total responses that answered that they were working overseas.

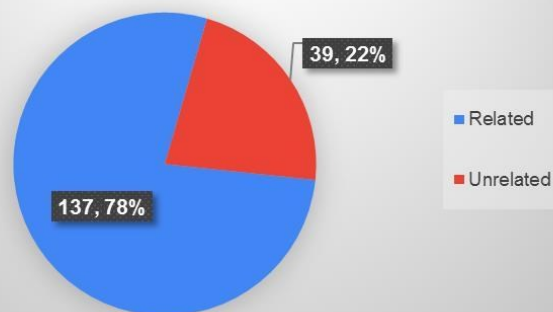
### Length of Stay in Present Job of Respondents



**Figure 9.** Length of Stay of in Present Job of Respondents

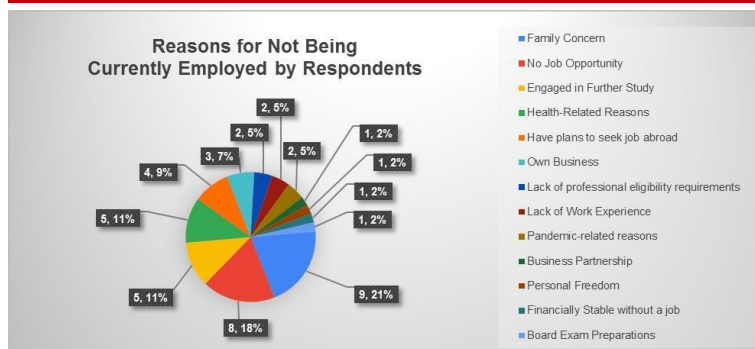
Figure 2.2.3 shows the length of stay in present job of respondents that are currently employed. Majority of the employed respondents have been staying in their current job for one year to less than two years with 44 responses or 25% of the total responses. It is closely followed by respondents who have been staying in their current job for one month to 6 months with 42 responses or 24%. The rest is as follows: 29 respondents (16%) have been staying for three (3) to less than four (4) years, 24 respondents (14%) have been staying for two to less than three years, 19 respondents (11%) have been staying in their current job for more than four years and lastly, 18 respondents (10%) have been staying for seven to 11 months.

### Relation of Current Employment to Program of Respondents



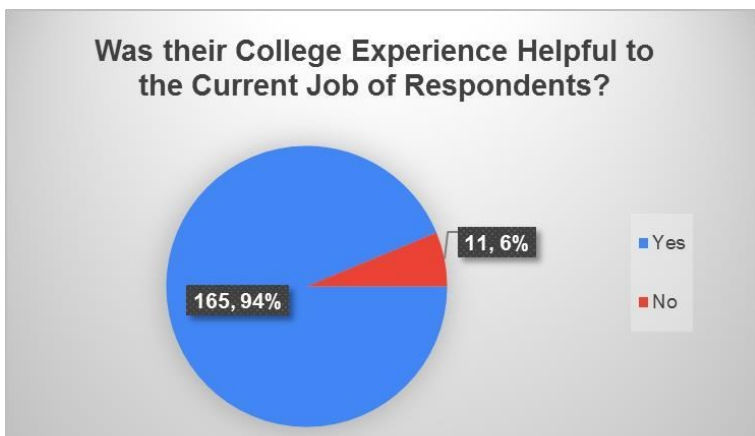
**Figure 10.** Relation of Current Employment to Program of Respondents

Figure 10 shows the relation of currently employed graduates' jobs to the program they took in college. Most of the respondents answered that their current employment is related to their graduated course with 137 responses or 78% of the total responses. Thirty-nine (39) respondents answered that their current employment is not related to their graduated course.



**Figure 11.** Reasons for Not Being Currently Employed by Respondents

Figure 11 shows the different reasons stated by the 35 unemployed respondents on why they are currently not employed. Majority of their responses were about family concerns with nine or 21% of the total responses. It is followed by no job opportunity with eight responses (18%), then by being engaged in further study and health-related reasons with five responses or 11% each. Other reasons were having plans to seek job abroad with four responses (9%) and having their own business with three responses (7%). Lacking professional eligibility requirements, lack of work experience, and pandemic-related reasons all have two responses each for 5%. Lastly, business partnership, personal freedom, financially stable without a job, and board exam preparations all have one response each for 2%.



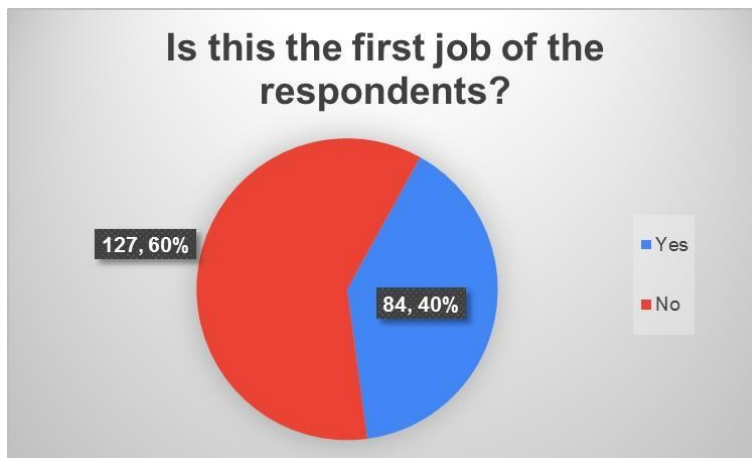
**Figure 12.** Was their college experience helpful to the current job of respondents?

Figure 3 shows the answers of the 176 employed respondents when asked if their college experience was helpful to them in their current job. Majority of the respondents answered that their experience was useful with 165 responses or 94% of the total response. Only eleven (11) respondents or 6% of the respondents answered that their experience was not useful in their current job.

Table 1 shows the ranking of skills utilized by the respondents in their current job. The skill that is most utilized by the graduates according to the survey is critical thinking skills with an average of 4.64. It is followed by Problem-solving skills with 4.60, then by decision-making skills with 4.56. Next, communication skills is the fourth most used skill with 4.53, followed by human relation skills with 4.50. Lastly, computer and technology skills scored an average of 4.44, while entrepreneurial skills with an average of 3.99.

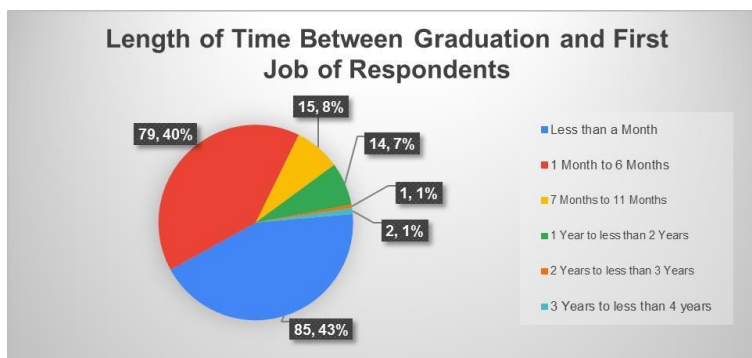
**Table 1.** Skills Utilized by Respondents in their Current Job

Skills	Mean	Ranking
Critical Thinking Skills	4.64	1
Problem-Solving Skills	4.60	2
Decision-making skills	4.56	3
Communication Skills	4.53	4
Human Relation Skills	4.50	5
Computer / Technology Skills	4.44	6
Entrepreneurial Skills	3.99	7



**Figure 13.** Is this the first job of the respondents?

Figure 13 shows the answers of the respondents regarding their first jobs whether currently employed or not. Majority of the respondents answered that this was not their first job with 127 responses or 60% of the total responses. The other 40% or 84 respondents answered that this was their first job after graduating.



**Figure 14.** Length of Time Between Graduation and First Job of Respondents

Figure 14 shows the length of time between graduation and first job of the respondents. Majority of the respondents found their first job in less than a month after graduating with 85 responses or 43% of the total responses. This is followed by respondents who took one to six months to find their first job with 79 responses or 40% of the responses.

Fifteen (15) respondents or 8% of the respondents took seven to 11 months, while 14 respondents (7%) took one to less than two years. Two (2) respondents took three to less than four years, accounting for 1% of the responses, and one respondent (1%) took two to less than three years to get their first job.

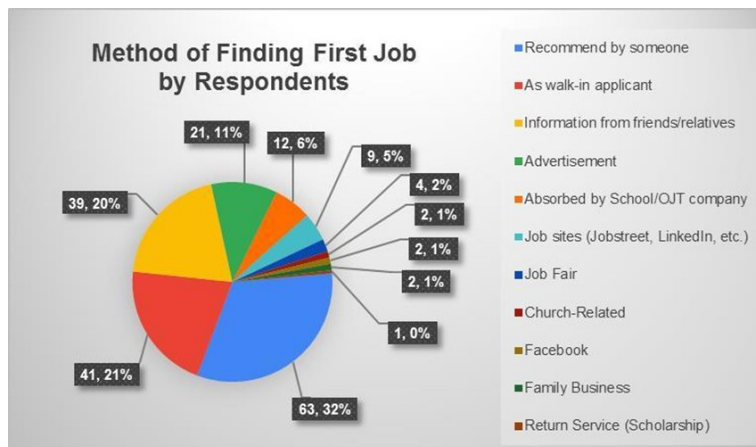


Figure 15. Method of Finding First Job by Respondents

Figure 15 shows the profile of the methods used by the respondents in finding their first job. Most of the respondents gained their first job by being recommended by someone with 63 respondents or 32% of the total responses. It was followed by applying as a walk-in applicant with 41 respondents or 21%, which is then followed by information from friends or relatives with 39 respondents or 20%. The rest of the responses are as follows: 21 respondents from advertisement (11%), 12 respondents were absorbed by school or company from their previous on-the-job (OJT) training (6%), nine respondents got their first job through job sites (5%), four respondents or 2% were from a job fair, and church-related methods, Facebook, and family business had two respondents or 1% each. Lastly, one respondent got their first job as a return service for scholarship which was composed less than 1% of the responses.

Figure 16 shows the recommendations of the graduate respondents to improve the quality of St. Dominic College of Asia. Majority of the responses mentioned additional on-the-job experience / training with 58 responses, followed by educational seminars and workshops with 30 responses. Improvement of services gathered 24 responses while getting better learning instructors or staff have 23 responses. Better curriculum and quality of education got 21 responses, adding or improving facilities got 16 responses, and better student assistance had six responses. Other recommendations were supporting students for licensure / civil service exams (5 responses), establishing connections with local and international companies (4 responses), provide assistance for employment (3 responses), create opportunities for student-alumni interactions (2 responses), addition of more masteral courses (2 responses), conduct more research studies (1 response), mentorship programs (1 response), and continuation of participating in competitions outside of school (1 response).



Figure 16. Recommendations for Improvement from the Respondents

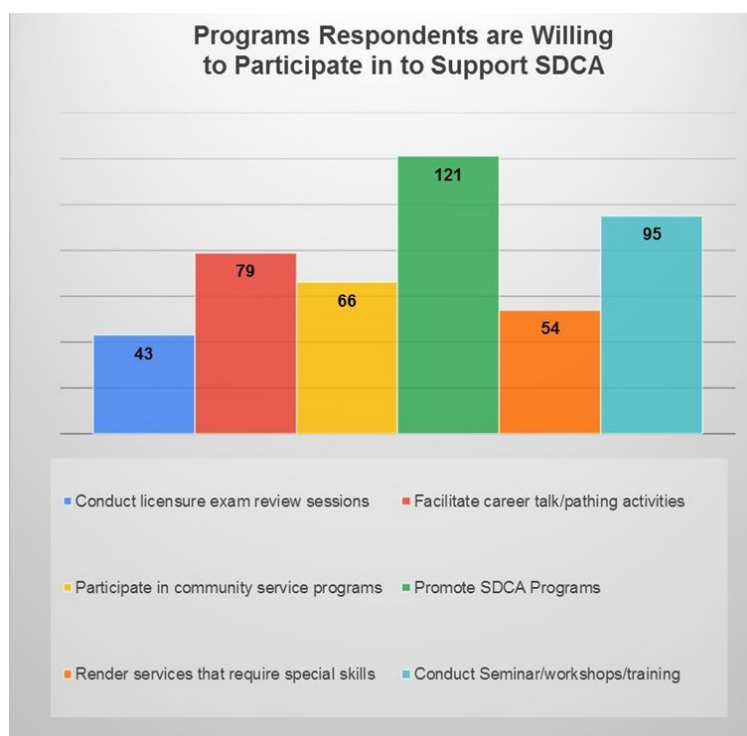


Figure 17. Programs Respondents are Willing to Participate in to Support SDCA

Figure 17 shows the programs the respondents are willing to participate in to support SDCA. Majority of them are willing to promote programs with 121 responses, followed by conducting seminars, workshops, and trainings with 95 responses, then by facilitating career talk and pathing activities with 79 responses.



Participating in community service programs gathered 66 responses while 54 respondents are willing to render services that require special skills. Lastly, 43 respondents are willing to conduct licensure review sessions.

### Discussion

After the data had been collected, interpreted, and analyzed, the following findings were drawn:

On the demographic profile, majority of the respondents were female and are currently single. Respondents to the study came from different courses (BA Communication, BS Education, BS Psychology, BS Accountancy, BS Accounting Technology, BS Business Administration, BS Computer Science, BA Multimedia Arts, BS Information Technology, BS Hospitality Management, BS Tourism Management, BS Biology, BS Medical Technology, BS Nursing, and BS Pharmacy), with the majority coming from BS Hospitality Management. Also, most of them were graduates of Batch 2019.

On the status of graduates in different categories, post-graduate studies were not applicable to the majority of the respondents. Most of the respondents are currently employed, and among them are regular or permanent employees who are employed locally. They have mostly been in their current job for one to six months. Notably, it is followed by respondents who have been in their current job for a year to less than two years. The majority of the respondents are employed in jobs related to their graduate program. However, the most frequently cited reason for being currently unemployed is because of family concerns. This is notably followed by currently having no job opportunities.

Majority of the respondents found their college experience useful in their current employment. Respondents answered critical thinking skills as the most utilized skill they have learned, followed by problem-solving skills and decision-making skills.

Majority of the respondents answered that they are currently not at their first job after graduation. It is because most of them found their first job through the recommendation of someone.

Additional on-the-job experience and training are the most frequently mentioned recommendations of the respondents to improve the quality of St. Dominic College of Asia. In a study by Trinidad (2020), student interns shall maximize their stay with the training company or establishment where they are working by taking different opportunities to enhance their skills, find their potential workplace, and identify their area of preference in the workplace setting. Moreover, internship programs build a strong relationship with classroom knowledge through workplace realities, give innovative experiences to students, and enable them to enter the job market for this modern generation (Anjum, 2020). Magnaye (2022) added that Philippine universities, including higher education institutions, must implement more services so that effective implementation of student internship programs can be made possible, such as supervision mobility, a grievance committee, and the utilization of vehicles. These internships not only expose students to a particular profession or industry but also help them develop and apply their practical and managerial skills in the workplace.

Other notable opinions are educational seminars and workshops, improvement of services, getting better learning instructors and staff, better curriculum and quality of education, and adding or improving facilities. The majority of the respondents are willing to promote SDCA programs to support the institution. Notably, it is followed by respondents willing to conduct seminars, workshops, and trainings.

### Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following conclusions were derived:

1. Majority of the SDCA graduates from years 2014-2021 are employed even during this time of pandemic while those who are currently unemployed are due to family concern. Most were likely to have found their jobs recently while the others most likely stayed with their current employers since the start of the pandemic.
2. Among the graduate respondents, majority of the graduates are working in their field of specializations, and less than a quarter of graduates being underemployed.
3. Revisiting curriculum offerings should be emphasized vis-à-vis the needs of industry partners and SDCA.

### Recommendations

The graduating students must be given enough training and experience to adapt to the current changes in the industry, particularly the rise of technology and applications due to work-from-home setups. Seminars and workshops are important as well in giving the students' knowledge and hands-on practice.

The school should invest in hiring additional competent professors, especially for specialized subjects, and invest in increasing the skills and knowledge of current professors to teach the students how to adapt to the current changes in the industry. The school could invite graduates who have been working in their field of specialization for a good number of years already to be resource speakers at a pre-employment seminar to be able to give inspiration and insights that may be beneficial for the unemployed, underemployed, and those who will seek employment in relevance to their field of specialization.

The school must emphasize skills related to critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making, along with other competencies, to strengthen the employability of graduating students. Extending seminars, workshops, and trainings for unemployed alumni can also increase the employability of the graduates. Lastly, the school must strengthen and increase connections to local and international industries to ensure better on-the-job training as well as create and establish job opportunities for graduating students and alumni members.

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